

**Senator Lisa Murkowski**  
**Senator Foreign Relations Committee hearing**  
**July 19, 2007**  
**Ambassador Ryan Crocker via videoconference**  
**Statement for the Record:**

Mr. Ambassador, thank you for taking the time out of your schedule to make yourself available to the Committee for this hearing. The Senate has spent a great number of hours this week discussing where we as a nation are in terms of our strategy for Iraq and what kind of progress is being achieved. I'm not sure that we resolved anything other than that there remains many divergent views on our continued military presence in Iraq.

The interim report issued by the President on July 12 underlines what has become a recurring source of frustration for many of us; our military is achieving some success on the ground, particularly in Anbar Province, but political achievements on the part of the Iraqi Government have been much slower, if not nonexistent. Iraq's political leaders must be able to demonstrate to the Iraqi and American people their willingness and ability to set aside sectarian differences to make difficult decisions and reach compromises for Iraq as a whole.

Mr. Ambassador, Senator Sununu and I unfortunately missed you when we visited Iraq this past March – our visit occurring just before you took up your current post. One of the things that was impressed on me during my time there was the need to have a civilian surge to go along with the military surge. To make sure that the progress that is achieved on the military side in terms of training Iraqi troops and policeman, and securing more areas of Baghdad and the rest of Iraq, is not undercut by a lack of technocrats to perform activities such as the detention and prosecution of those who break the law, or develop the financial capability to distribute federal revenues – or even to deliver paychecks to the Iraqi troops. These are capabilities that need to be in place if the Iraqi Government does enact key pieces of legislation such as hydrocarbon revenue distribution, or deBaathification laws. The passage of these laws means nothing if there is no ability to implement them. So I urge this Administration to ensure we are doing our part in those areas that don't get quite as much media attention, so that these next steps are in place.

I want to compliment the Ranking Member for his work with Senator Warner on their amendment to the Department of Defense Authorization bill. The legislation passed by Congress and signed into law by the President in May says that if it is determined in September that the benchmarks have not been met, or significant progress has not been made in attaining them, the President shall include in his report a description of how the United States' strategy for Iraq will be revised.

There are, of course, differing views on how, when, and whether our policy toward Iraq should change. While the Senate has not come to any agreement on that, the Lugar-Warner amendment rightly suggests that consideration for what happens after the September report and testimony from yourself and General Patreaus must be taking place

now. In my view this is not a prejudgment of the September report, but rather ensures that the Administration is at least putting together a Plan B. I whole heartedly agree.

Mr. Ambassador, I have committed to waiting for the September report before making a decision on my continued support for the current policy. But there are only so many times that the argument, “give it more time” can be taken seriously when our partner has not demonstrated that they are committed to the process as well. Verbal commitments are nice; visible action is better.

It is a frustrating position, as no matter how much we in Congress may want the Iraqi Government to succeed, it is basically out of our hands. They are the ones that need to make the decisions – to take the action. You commented in your testimony that the benchmarks may not be the best way to judge whether progress is being made – particularly at the provincial level. I agree that if we were to solely look at provinces like Anbar, the reports would be more positive, but that would leave out the largest population center in Iraq where the sectarian strife is most visible. I believe the line goes, as Baghdad goes, so goes Iraq.

We cannot cast their votes for them. It is not our place to determine what the best course of action for Iraq is. That is up to the Iraqi people and their elected government. But they must know, as the President has said on a number of occasions, America’s commitment in Iraq is not open-ended. The Iraqi Government has between now and September to demonstrate that they want the United States as their partner.

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